Sage Handbook Chapter

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Theme: Language, religion, culture, and multiculturalism in England and France.

Title: Diversity and inclusion in the classroom: young immigrant's perspectives in France and England

Abstract:

This chapter examines mechanisms of inclusion and exclusion in relation to language, religion and culture for young immigrants in France and England. Through a reflection on the role of current policy and media narratives about the "immigrant Other" in France and England, and the experience of children from immigrant backgrounds in both countries, this chapter questions current models of inclusion in schools. It calls for looking at both explicit and implicit attitudes towards linguistic, religious or cultural diversity and the forms of discrimination they might promote. It argues that recognizing the role of discourses around immigration, institutional structures and young people's agency can help fully embrace the affordances and possibilities diversity offers for education and create more inclusive multicultural environments that challenge implicit hierarchies and forms of discrimination.

Keywords: Inclusion, language, religion, immigration, France, England, discrimination, Bourdieu, Ricoeur

Diversity and inclusion in the classroom: young immigrant's perspectives in France and England

Introduction

This chapter examines mechanisms of inclusion and exclusion in relation to language, religion and culture for young immigrants in France and England. Debates around diversity and immigration in the UK and France over the past few years have pointed to the challenges faced by Western democratic societies with regard to the integration of increasingly diverse populations (Joppke, 2017). In a context of 'multicultural backlash' (Vertovec & Wessendorf, 2009), both countries currently face a similar new set of challenges: an increase in anti-immigration and xenophobic attitudes nationally and locally and a marked shift towards more extremist or populist politics. These issues have been closely linked to questions about language and religion, often associated with rising fears of fragmented societies and the threat of the imagined 'immigrant Other'.

Within these debates, education has occupied a central, yet paradoxical, place. On the one hand, schools have been largely criticised for failing to successfully integrate increasingly diverse immigrant populations. On the other hand, education is seen as a vector of socialisation, with the aim of providing young people with the adequate linguistic, cultural and social skills to successfully participate in society (HCI, 2011; DfE, 2013; Staeheli, Attoh & Mitchell, 2013; Alba & Holdaway, 2014). This view is apparent in the reinforcement of national values in the curriculum in both England and France. These policy initiatives are underpinned by the idea of education as a tool for integration, through the development of a unitary idea of belonging and identity. As such, they are not devoid of contradictions and tensions.

This chapter addresses these issues and tensions by examining the experiences of inclusion and exclusion of young people from immigrant backgrounds in France and England. It builds on previous work (Welply, 2015, 2017, 2018) which is re-examined in the light of recent contemporary social and political developments: the rise of the far right across Europe, the Brexit vote, increased anti-immigration sentiment. It builds on a cross-national ethnographic study that investigated the place of language, religion and culture for children in primary schools in France and England, through in-depth

interviews with children and age 10 and 11 year old.

Through a reflection on the role of current policy and media narratives about the 'immigrant Other' in France and England, this chapter questions current models of diversity and inclusion in education. It shows the importance of critically reflecting on mechanisms of exclusion at play in educational systems that remain, by and large, monolingual and monocultural. It highlights the difficulties faced daily by young people from immigrant backgrounds and the challenges this presents for negotiating linguistic and religious differences in school. It argues that recognizing the role of discourses around immigration, institutional structures and young people's agency can help fully embrace the affordances and possibilities diversity offers for education and create more inclusive multicultural environments that challenge implicit hierarchies and forms of discrimination.

Forms of inclusion: linguistic and religious diversity in schools in England and France

France and England provide interesting cross-national contexts to examine young immigrant's experiences of inclusion and exclusion in schools. Both countries present similar political, social, economic and demographic issues in relation to immigration and inclusion as measured by employment, health, access to education and school performance (www.ethnicity-facts-figures.service.gov.uk; https://www.insee.fr/en/statistiques), although in the absence of ethnic statistics in France, demographic and school data might not be directly comparable between countries.

France and England have long been presented as opposites when in comes to approaches to inclusion and the place accorded to linguistic and religious difference in schools. These contrasts are the reflection of wider 'diverging philosophies of integration' (Meer, Sala Pala, Modood & Simon, 2009, p.413) and different conceptual understandings of *equality* and *difference* (Raveaud, 2006). In schematic terms, the French *Republican model*, which promotes a unitary conception of belonging to the nation, based on universalist values and the assimilation of individuals into a unified

whole, is generally contrasted with the British *multicultural model,* which emphasises particularist values and the recognition of plurality as a mode of belonging to society (Bertossi, 2011; Modood, 2011).

These different philosophies of integration are reflected in the educational values of each country (Alexander, 2000). In France, school is seen as a vector of socialisation with the aim to abstract its pupil citizens from cultural, linguistic or religious particularities. This is underpinned by the idea of 'indifference to differences' in the public sphere of school (van Zanten, 2000). Conversely, in England, inclusion is promoted through the recognition and celebration of ethnic, linguistic and religious particularities, with a differentiated pedagogical approach that embraces diversity (Meer et al., 2009).

However, this antithetical view of inclusion and difference in France and England needs to be nuanced. There have been recent points of convergence in educational policies in each country, which promote similar forms of national unity and are not devoid of assimilationist tones. The logic of adaptation of values in schools also means that teachers are not always able to apply the ideas of multiculturalism or republicanism in practice. Finally, these approaches to difference and inclusion are widely debated in each country. The British multicultural model has been strongly criticised for naturalising inequality under a veneer of tolerance (Gillborn, 2015) whilst the French Republican model has been in crisis for the last two decades, seen as unable to respond to the current challenges of increased diversity and socio-economic disadvantage in the urban peripheries (*banlieues*) (Lorcerie, 2017).

In the past decade, public and media discourse in both countries have also shown points of convergence in the debates around religious and linguistic diversity at school, often portrayed negative as a threat for social cohesion and the successful functioning of schools (Lorcerie, 2017; Elton-Chalcraft, 2017). Despite marked differences in approaches to inclusion and diversity in France and England, there have been increasingly similar monolingual discourses around linguistic diversity in schools. These discourses are underpinned by a conception of linguistic diversity as a deficit, which hinders children's successful learning, cognitive development, attainment and social inclusion (Michael-Luna, 2013; Agacinski et al., 2015; Arnot et al, 2014; Strand

et al, 2015, Cusset et al, 2015).

These views are framed by wider socio-political discourses. In the UK, a negative portrayal of children with English as an Additional Language (EAL) has emerged in the tabloid and mainstream media. British schools have been presented as 'swamped' by non-English speakers, which is seen as threatening the very character of British school and a huge drain on resources (Robertson, 2016). The increase in linguistic diversity in school has been associated with fractures in society, often intersecting with negative discourses on religious diversity and communitarianism. A striking example is the then British Prime Minister David Cameron's reference in 2016 to the risk of extremism that might arise from not learning English (Mason and Sherwood, 2016). In France, a similar negative discourse on linguistic diversity builds on the official nature of monolingualism, enshrined within the French Constitution since 1992, which states that French is the only language of the Republic. Children who speak French as a foreign language are perceived as an obstacle to successful inclusion in schools, and in some cases speaking a foreign language is connected to anti-social behaviour (Bénisti, 2004). The introduction of Arabic language classes in primary schools in June 2016 also sparked strong debates and criticisms, and the initiatives were presented as a route towards communitarianism and extremism (Genevard, 2016; Talpin, O'Miel, Fregosie, 2017; Beyer, 2015). These converging discourses in England and France highlight the intersection of categories of difference, here language and religion, in the construction of negative narratives of Otherness.

The place of religion in schools in France and England is the area in which the strongest contrasts can be found. France's principle of *laïcité* (secularism) contrasts sharply with the place of religion in the English educational system (Modood & Kastoryano, 2007). In France religion is excluded from the public sphere of school both in terms of practices and curriculum. In England, religion has both a curricular and spiritual place in schools, with the existence of public faith schools and Religious Education as a discrete curriculum subject.

However, these different approaches to the place of religion in school are not unproblematic. Controversies around the discriminatory nature of the *laïcité* principle in French schools have led to polarised debates in policy and in the academic literature

(Lorcerie, 2017). Debates around wearing headscarves in school, which have been long standing in France, also began to arise in the UK (Adams, 2018). In the last two decades, there has been an increased tension around Islam and schools in media and public discourse in France and England, underpinned by a securitisation discourse and distrust towards Muslim youth (Collet, 2018; Pal Sian, 2015). The 'Trojan horse' scandal in Birmingham in 2014, the introduction of the Prevent Duty to counter extremism in UK schools in 2015, the reinforcement of *laïcité* and Republican values and the implementation of high level security measures *plan vigipirate* in French school (2015/2016) are all illustrative examples of this climate of fear towards the "threatening Other' in schools (Welply, 2018).

The above discussion highlights a paradox inherent to current discourses about the role of schools in Western democracies. On the one hand, public discourse laments the failure of schools to promote the successful inclusion of increasingly diverse populations. On the other hand they emphasise the need for educational systems to counteract this fragmentation of society and the threat it poses to national cohesion. As such, schools are urged to better equip young people with the linguistic, social and cultural tools needed for them to participate successfully in society (Elton-Chalcraft et al, 2017). This was illustrated in educational policy in recent years: the introduction of Fundamental British Values in the British curriculum (November 2014) or the proposal of a new programme of moral and civic education in the French curriculum (*Grande Mobilisation pour les Valeurs de la République* January 2015). These policy responses view education as a way of fostering social cohesion through a common sense of belonging and national identity. However, they remain inscribed in a set of unresolved tensions:

1. They draw on a modernist rhetoric inscribed historically in a national project, whilst attempting to respond to forms of mobility and diversity that articulate multiple levels of representation (local, national, global, individual, community, collective).
2. They assume unitary and homogenous educational structures, which tend to overlook the development of multiple actors, institutions and school spaces.
3. They articulate concepts such as integration, inclusion, citizenship, belonging, and national unity uncritically, without much recognition of the value-laden and

contested nature of these notions in today's political landscape.

4. They implicitly position new categories of difference (language and religion) as 'Other' and a threat to a common belonging and identity.

The second part of this chapter examines these tensions in practice: How do these tensions impact on schools' approaches to linguistic and religious diversity? How do they impact the experience of children from immigrant backgrounds?

Diversity in practice: the views of children from immigrant backgrounds

This section examines the ways in which public discourse and wider societal values impact on school practices and how these were interpreted by children from immigrant backgrounds, in order to investigate the different conceptualisations of difference and approaches to inclusion in schools in each country. This approach is premised on the idea that the views of children can offer new perspectives on current issues by moving away from a sole focus on micro-level of children's immediate experience and situating them within wider socio-political discourses (James & Christiansen, 2017). This 'politics of scale' (Ansell, 2009) recognises both the situatedness of children's views and their agency in constructing meaning and understanding within wider contexts. To this intent, this study is underpinned by the work of Pierre Bourdieu (1991), and Paul Ricoeur (1986), which provide a theoretical lens that integrates the role of the institution and wider social contexts with children's own agency. Bourdieu's Theory of Practice, and his concepts of *legitimation*, *misrecognition* and *symbolic power* offer powerful tools to analyse the role of national educational values and institutional norms in the ways in which linguistic and religious diversity are conceptualised in French and English schools (Bourdieu ,1991; van Zanten, 2000). Processes of institutional legitimation of certain linguistic and cultural norms over others, which are in turn internalised (misrecognised) by those who do not possess those dominant forms of cultural capital, participate in mechanisms of inclusion and exclusion at school, through the justification of single national legitimate language and culture (Blackledge, 2000, p.4). However, whilst Bourdieu's concepts of offers tools to examine the role of the institution and develop an understanding of tacit forms of symbolic domination, it remains underpinned by a notion of 'false consciousness' and 'hidden ideology' which can only be exposed by the sociologist and thus gives little possibility for leverage or

change from individuals (Boltanski, 2006). Moreover, although Bourdieu's notion of habitus fully integrates the individual in the analysis, the emphasis on 'dispositions' remains focused on a unitary conception of the individual within a given field and, as such, does not fully acknowledge the multiple ways in which children might position themselves and negotiate linguistic and religious differences in relation to the institution (Thévenot, 2012). In this respect, Ricoeur's work on 'ideology and utopia' (1986) allows us to consider dominant values (ideology) through a different lens, which acknowledges children's capacity to imagine and create alternative views and identities. It helps emphasise the capacity of children to negotiate multiple positions in relation to structural and institutional values and constraints. Taken together, the work of Bourdieu and Ricoeur provides a sound theoretical underpinning for a cross-national examination of children's experiences of linguistic and religious diversity in schools.

Conceptualising "the Other"

The concept of 'Otherness' is widely discussed and debated in philosophy and the social sciences. It raises questions of an ontological nature, which are beyond the scope of this study. In the view of Ricoeur's, Otherness is constitutive of identity, by defining oneself in relation to another, which one is not (1990). In cultural theory and postcolonial studies, the "Other" is inscribed within hierarchical power relations, a dichotomous separation between 'Them' and 'Us', which serves to perpetuate injustice and inequalities (Hall, 1992; Said, 2003).

The term 'Otherness' in this study draws the above theoretical considerations. However, the particular use of the term in this article principally emerges from the views of the children who participated in this study. As such, the term does not have a fixed meaning, but is used to reflect the multiple dimensions and the transformation of the meaning of Otherness in children's representations. In children's narratives, Otherness ranged from a distinction between what was considered legitimate in the official realm of school to a re-negotiation of the term in informal school spaces. Thus the term 'Otherness' in this article recognises the ideological underpinnings and fluidity of the term and its renegotiation in children's symbolic representations and narratives.

The research

Findings presented in this chapter draw on data from a cross-national ethnographic study, which examined the views of 10 and 11- year old children from immigrant backgrounds in two primary schools, one in France and one in England. Schools were situated in urban areas marked by high immigration and social disadvantage. The research was carried out in two classes, Year 6 in the English school and CM2 in the French school. Each class was linguistically and religiously diverse. Tables 1 and 2 below give an overview of the demographics and school performance for each site.

Table 1. Overview of the French and English case schools

	French school	**English school**
Town	Medium size town. 70 000 people, 58th town in size in France.	Medium size town. 108 000, 78th town in size in the UK
Urban area	Urban periphery '*quartiers Nord'*. Socially disadvantaged area. Higher unemployment than average. Strong concentration of social housing (H.L.M.).	Socially-disadvantaged area "An area that is more socially and economically disadvantaged than is typical in England" (OFSTED 2011)
Size of school	181 pupils	384 pupils
School composition	School classified as Z.E.P. (*Zone d'Education Prioritaire*) at the time of research	"Proportion of children known to be eligible for free school meals is above national average"(OFSTED 2011)
Academic profile	Results of national evaluations showed that academic performance in those tests was below national average and slightly below ZEP averages, in CE1 (Year 3) and CE2 (Year 4) The school had a CLIS (special educational need) class with 8 children	The school was deemed 'good' in the OFSTED 2008 report and 'outstanding' in the OFSTED 2011 report. Pupils attainment was described as 'broadly average' in OFSTED 2011 report The quality of pupils' learning and their progress was described as above average. Results in terms of attainment level was below national average.

	French school	English school
Immigrant-background children	Mainly North African and East Asian (Laos). There were no newly-arrived children (*primo-arrivants*). The number of children from 'non francophone families' was reported as 9 in 2006/2007	Mainly Bangladeshi and Eastern European (Polish). Percentage of children with English not as a first language: 25.0% 20 different languages spoken in the school "Proportion of pupils with English as an additional language is above average"(OFSTED 2011) 'Proportion of pupils who are of minority ethnic heritage is above average' (OFSTED 2011)
	North African: 14.7% East Asian: 12.9% Turkish: 7.73% Eastern European: 2.76% Central African: 4.97%	Total ethnic minority: 21% Total Bangladeshi: 14% Total Polish: 8%

Whilst the overall study involved children from immigrant and non-immigrant backgrounds, the findings reported here draw only on the views of children from immigrant backgrounds. This included 11 children in the French school: 5 boys (1 Algerian, 1 French Reunion/Cambodian, 1 Hmong, 1 Hmong/French, 1 Laotian/Chinese) and 6 girls (1 Turkish/French, 1 Indian, 1 Laotian, 1 Hmong, 1 Algerian and 1 Moroccan) and 7 children in the English school: 2 boys (1 Bangladeshi and 1 Portuguese) and 5 girls (3 Bangladeshi, 1 Russian and 1 Italian/English[i]). These participants were all from second-generation immigrant families, meaning that their parents had migrated from outside the country but the children were born in England or France. None of the children were undocumented migrants and they were all respectively English or French citizens (some with dual nationality). Family migrant trajectories were what could be termed 'forced economic migration' (Castles, 2003), families who had migrated to escape poverty and seek low wage manual employment. Children all spoke a different home language but were proficient in the dominant national language of the school (English or French). The children's school outcomes were diverse, with a range of levels and abilities. All participants were from similar socio-economic backgrounds. Their parents' occupation could be defined mainly as lower professional or working class, and at times unemployed.

The term ‘children from immigrant backgrounds’ encompasses children whose parents or grandparents experienced immigration and a different educational schooling system. These children were all from families where a different language was spoken at home and who shared a different cultural background. In line with the theoretical underpinnings of this study, this definition is not fixed or essentialised but is understood as fluid, reflecting multiple identities. Within this, the limitations of the category “immigrant” are recognised. Although the term immigrant background offers a helpful analytical lens, it did not always account for the complex ways in which participants defined themselves, which often transcended these defined categories. Thus, the use of the term ‘immigrant’ recognises the limitation of set categories and views them as constructed, fluid and changing.

Research was carried out full-time over a period of four months in the English school and six months in the French school. Participant observation was complemented by interviews (group and individual) with children and individual interviews with staff. Interview techniques were adapted to the young age of the children, paying attention to the use of language and concepts, making sure all children could participate equally in group interviews and using other participatory methods such as drawings and games. In addition, children were given diaries to write in over a period of two weeks, on a voluntary basis. Particular emphasis was given to ethical issues arising from working with young children in school. Anonymity and confidentiality was guaranteed for all participants throughout the research process. All interviews were carried out in English or French, and were audio-recorded. Transcribed interviews, diary entries and fieldnotes from participant observations were analysed thematically. This next section draws on the themes that emerged from the data in relation to the place of language and religion in school.

The school contexts: different conceptualisations of difference and inclusion

In the two schools that were part of this research, the approach to differences were characteristic of the wider value orientations of the dominant philosophies of integration in each country. Although there were some adaptations, in the English school the core ethos was one of inclusion, which built on the recognition of differences

and the celebration of diversity. This was illustrated by the celebration of religious festivals such as Eid and Diwali and multilingual signs across the school. In French school, assimilation through 'indifference to differences' predominated. The principle of *laïcité* was clearly expressed in the school rules, which forbid 'any sign that would provoke a belonging to a religion' (school regulations). However, in practice, these contrasts were less clear-cut. In the English school, there was very little evidence of active engagement with children's different languages or religion beyond festivals and displays. In the French school, some teachers did encourage children to talk about their 'origin'[ii] in class, by making flags or singing songs in children's home languages. In other cases, they lifted the 'indifference to differences' principle through stereotypical interpretations of diversity, such as the idea that speaking other languages threatened the overall social cohesion within the school. This highlights the ways in which 'national' conceptualisations of difference did not always fit in practice, and schools and teachers struggled to articulate these values with their everyday experience in the classroom. In both cases, teachers' views highlighted the multiple tensions between monocultural school systems and the experience of diversity in each school. These tensions were also apparent in children's views.

The school organisational cultures presented stark contrasts that can help contextualise these opposing conceptualisations of difference. These differences included physical spaces and symbolic spaces. In the English school, the multiplicity of specialised and individualised spaces in the classroom and whole school, tailored for specific purposes and pupil needs, contrasted sharply with the more collective and functionalist layout and organisation of the French school, which only contained large, open spaces to be shared by all. The architecture and the organisation of space in school reflected differences between the aims and values of each school (individualism *versus* collectivism, inclusion of the 'whole child' versus functionality of the 'pupil'). These contrasts in terms of space organisation reflect different approaches to the child and pupil, and conceptions of the role of school.

Beyond the physical organisation of space, the symbolic representations of space differed between the two schools. Whilst the French school could be characterised by clearly defined boundaries, these boundaries were more blurred in the English school. This applied to all areas: concepts such as "being a pupil" or the role of school were clearly defined in the French school but less delineated in the English school. Formal

and informal spaces were more clearly separated in the French school than the English school. Expectations were more explicit in the French school and more implicit in the English school. As such, public and private spheres were more distinct in the French school than in the English school.

The contrasts between French and English schools in terms of conceptualisation of difference and organisation structure can help contextualise and understand the views of the children themselves, examined below.

Children's views: the place of religion in school

Perhaps unsurprisingly, religion emerged as the greatest contrast between the French and the English schools under study. This reflected the different approaches to secularism in each school system and the different place accorded to religion in school (Raymond & Modood, 2007). However, this difference was not just expressed as the presence or absence of religion in schools. Rather, it performed what different legitimising functions (Bourdieu, 1991). Whilst in the English school religion was perceived as the only legitimate space for some immigrant-background children to talk about differences in school, in the French school, religion was viewed as problematic and source of conflict.

In the English school, there were variations in children's perceptions, according to their own religious background. Non-Muslim immigrant-background children never mentioned religion, whereas for Muslim children, religion was at the forefront of their school experience. For Muslim children, religion was viewed as the one legitimate curricular space to talk about Otherness, both linguistic and religious. When asked about speaking other languages in school, Muslim children drew immediate connections to religion and Religious Education, as shown below.

> *Interviewer: Some of you speak other languages. Do you ever talk about it with teachers?*
> Akhil: Yeah, I remember in Year 2, in R.E. we learnt about Islam.
> *Interviewer: Okay, so did you talk about it then?*
> Akhil: Yeah, I talked about it. I nearly know all the Koran.
> (Akhil, 10 year-old boy, Bangladeshi background, Group interview)

Saalima also spoke about religion in relation to language and focused on R.E as the sphere in which to talk about differences in formal school spaces.

> Saalima: (…) when we was in Year Five Miss Warrington did…err…(…) She did, err …. she wanted people who spoke Bengali to talk to her class about what Bengali, mean, like Muslims, Bengali, stuff like that, so me and Taahira and Nabeela we all made this like speech paper. (…)So we wrote it on a piece of paper and then when we did it we had a Koran, and we showed them a praying mat and special clothes. (…) And then we were talking about, most of the things we were talking about was Arab…err….about the Koran (…) and a couple of weeks later they went to a mosque and they invited me and Taahira and Nabeela to go, as well.
> (Saalima, 11 year-old girl, Bangadeshi background, group interview)

Akhil's response was illustrative of other comments made by Muslim children during interviews. This association of religion with languages raises several points. Firstly, children's connection between their home language (Bengali), Arabic and Islam can be seen as a way of legitimising Otherness within the monocultural school, by making associations with 1) a legitimate curricular subject, 2) forms of literacy in another language (this can explain the mention of Arabic rather than Bengali). This is illustrated by one of the participant's comment: 'They wanted us to say things about Bengali, like our religion, Islamic and *so we told them that we read books and stuff*.' (Nabeela, 10 year-old girl, Bangladeshi background, individual interview *emphasis added*).

For many of the Muslim children interviewed, religion constituted a point of entry that allowed them to negotiate other dimensions of Otherness in relation to formal school spaces. This enabled children to bridge the perceived division between Them (children's Otherness) and Us (the monocultural and monolingual school system). This bridging of this Them *versus* Us dichotomy through the mention of religion was highlighted in one of the entries of Taahira's diary:

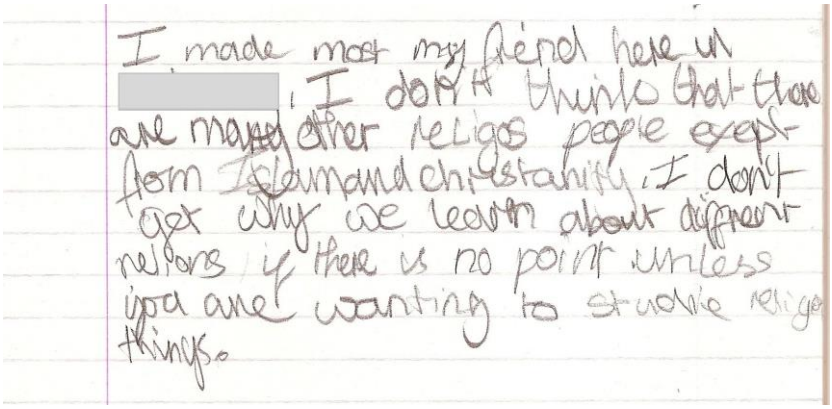

Image 1. Extract from Taahira's diary

> I don't think that there are many other religious people except from Islam and Christianity. I don't get why we learn about different religions. If there is no point unless you are wanting to study religious things. (Taahira, 11 year-old girl, Bangadeshi background, diary)

Taahira's comment shifts the 'Them'/'Us' division to include Christianity and Islam on the 'Us' side and 'different' religions on the 'Them' side, which thus become 'Other'. In doing so, Taahira confers curricular legitimacy to Christianity and Islam, whilst the other religions are constructed as illegitimate.

Children's views of the place of religion in the French case stood in sharp contrast to the English case.

French case: religion as interdiction

In the French case, immigrant-background children rarely mentioned religion when discussing Otherness in school, which can appear to be in line with the principle of *laïcité*, which underpins secularism in France (Modood and Kastoryano, 2007). When religion was mentioned, it was also associated to language, but in this case, rather than conferring curricular legitimacy in school, religion was viewed as problematic and forbidden.

> Farida: No, I don't know because it's not religion. In fact they do not want religion to penetrate school.

(Farida, 10 year-old girl, Moroccan background, group interview)

This comment offers a good illustration of the unease and tension associated with the place of religion in French schools, in particular in relation to Islam (Lorcerie, 2017). These views are inscribed in a perceived tension between Islam and Republican principles (Meer et al, 2009). Farida's comment above positions religion as undesirable in school. The use of the term 'penetrate' carries an invasive and illegal dimension and negatively constructs religion as a threat to the public school space. However, in Farida's representations, the interdiction of religion in school is not constructed as a clearly stated rule, but is shrouded in uncertainty. This uncertainty surrounding the place of religion in school can be explained by the fact that teachers in the French school often interpreted the *laïcité* principle as excluding any talk of religion in school. However, this silence around religion was not always easy to interpret for children, who viewed religion as 'taboo' and constructed it as undesirable or even illicit in the public sphere. This interdiction often linked religion to Arabic language, turning *laïcité* into a rejection of the Muslim Arab Other rather than a universal principle.

The above has shown the different place of religion in the French and English school and the different and somewhat contradictory symbolic functions religion performed in each case. Bourdieu's notion of *legitimation* offers a key to understand these different symbolic functions (1991). Whilst in the English case, children viewed religion as a legitimate sphere to talk about Otherness in school, in the French case, religion was constructed as negative and undesirable. These differences went beyond religion itself and impacted on the way Otherness was articulated by children in school. In the English case, children could build on religion to legitimise other dimensions of Otherness, such as language and cultural background, in school. In contrast, in the French case, the association of religion to language or culture participated in constructing Otherness as illicit in formal school spaces and in symbolically positioning Islam and Arabic languages as undesirable in the school space. This points to the way in which religion, language and nationality are closely intertwined in identity constructions.

Negotiating language: school as monolingual and monocultural spaces

When it came to views on language, the views of children from French and English schools tended to converge, despite very different approaches to cultural, linguistic and religious differences in each school and in each country.

In the French school, children's overarching view was that of 'formalised monolingualism' (Welply, 2017, p.147), in which French was the only legitimate language in school. This view was underpinned by republican values and ideas of national unity and citizenship:

> Imed: We can only speak French. The teacher said 'Here we are in a France and in a French school'.
> (Imed, 10-year-old boy, Algerian background, individual interview)

Speaking French in the correct, standardised way was perceived, by some children, as a prerequisite for participating in society as a citizen:

> Kenny: It's nationality and language. Because if you want to vote one day, you will not speak Laotian…you will not speak a foreign language.
> (Kenny, 11 year-old boy, Chinese-Laotian background, group interview)

This view built on an understanding of a clear separation between public and private spheres, with the public sphere of school being confined to the use of French language. However, monolingualism was often interpreted as an interdiction, in which some languages, in particular Arabic, were positioned as undesirable in school. This reflects wider common perceptions, which associate Islam with an Arabic identity (Lapeyronnie, 2013). It positions the children's other languages as illicit and outside legitimate school norms (for further discussion on religion and language, see Welply, 2017). Some children also portrayed Arabic as a threat to teachers, a way of insulting them without them understanding. This reveals a hierarchy of other language in which other, high status languages (such as English or Spanish) were deemed acceptable whereas other languages associated with migration (in particular Arabic) were constructed as illicit in school. This view was inscribed within wider media discourses of the 'uncivilised other' in the French urban fringe (banlieues), which carries postcolonial imagery and positions Arab speaking youth as the undesirable other

(Lapeyronnie, 2013). Thus, the monolingual ideology of French as the only language in school was not neutral but operated a delegitimising function, by positioning other languages as inferior or even illicit (for further discussion see Welply, 2017).

In the English school, approaches to language difference were marked by uncertainty around implicit monolingualism. This was somewhat surprising given the strong multilingual ethos of the school. Children appeared uncertain about the expectations around the use of language in school, which was most often associated with teacher preferences rather than a school-wide policy.

> Interviewer: Do you ever speak Bengali at school?
> Saalima: At school? Yeah half the time.
> Interviewer: And are you allowed to?
> Saalima: I'm not sure. They didn't make a rule about that either.
> Interviewer: So there is no rule?
> Saalima: But they still go yeah 'Make sure you always speak English,' but then, half the time they don't mind.
> (Saalima, 11 year-old girl, Bangladeshi background, individual interview)

In other cases, children felt that speaking other languages in school was undesirable because of the risk of saying negative things about others or using swear words.

> Interviewer: So can you speak Bengali with each other sometimes?
> Taahira: Well sometimes…if it's private.
> Interviewer: If it's private?
> Jade: Some teachers don't allow it.
> Chloe: Because you don't know what you are saying.
> (Taahira, 10 year-old girl, Bangladeshi background, group interview)

The comment above shows how children also constructed a separation between public and private spheres, with the idea that other languages (here Bengali) was only acceptable if it was contained within the private realm. This separation between the private and the public sphere, which might seem at first glance to be an innocuous situation meant to encourage the practical functioning of the school, in fact carries a deeper significance in relation to the place of language in school. Firstly, the idea of

teacher not allowing another language because they do not understand reveals an implicit monolingual approach, in which the only legitimate language of school is English. This is further reinforced in Saalima's comments below:

> Clarissa: They [teachers] are really not interested in what…what languages you speak.
> Interviewer: (…) And are the teachers interested in you?
> Saalima: I don't think so.
> Clarissa: I don't think so.
> Saalima: I think they just talk, they just only study about your literacy and your reading.
> (…)
> Saalima: But I think they don't care about the personality.
> (Saalima, 11 year-old girl, Bangladeshi background, group interview)

In the above comment, Saalima operates a distinction between her other language and 'literacy' and 'reading', which positions English as the only legitimate and literate school language and relegates her home language to a non-literate (and as such non-legitimate) language. This comment implicitly positions other language along a deficit model and shows and the internationalisation of legitimate monolingual norms operates a form of institutionalised miscrecognition (Bourdieu, 1991, p.153) in which the dominant view becomes that of a hierarchy of languages. This led to children downplaying their knowledge of other languages because they did not correspond to standard and legitimate forms of literacy defined in school, although there were exceptions to this (see Welply, 2017).

Creating more inclusive classrooms?

This chapter has shown that the contrasting value orientations around inclusion and difference in France and England are reflected in approaches to the inclusion of linguistic and religious diversity at multiple levels: policy, institutions, practices, teacher attitudes and children's experiences. However, in recent years, wider public discourses of fear of the immigrant Other and the danger of a threat 'from within', which define school as a vector for integration and social cohesion have led to points of convergence between the two countries, through a renationalisation of the curriculum

and a reinforcement of unitary national values (Fargues, 2017). It is perhaps unsurprising, then, that despite contrasting values and practices around inclusion and difference in each school, children's views converged in their understanding of school as a monolingual and monocultural space, in which Otherness (linguistic or religious) was perceived as illegitimate, undesirable or, at times, illicit. These views revealed the symbolic domination of a single language and culture in school, which was reinforced in teacher's attitudes and practices and misrecognised by children. As children in both schools were mainly from postcolonial immigration, the illegitimate construction of Otherness also reflected unequal power relations inscribed in postcolonial memory.

Despite these points of convergence between the French and English school, children's views showed different forms of negotiation of linguistic and religious diversity in school. In the French school, the illegitimacy of Otherness was understood as a formal and institutionalised divide, echoing universal republican principles and the idea of 'indifference to differences' (van Zanten, 2000). In the English school, the lack of legitimacy of Otherness was shrouded in uncertainty, and stood in tension with the multicultural ethos of the school. As such, children faced a situation of 'doublethink' in which their experience of Otherness in school stood in contrast to the professed ethos of the school (Gillborn, 2008).

Consequently, in the French case, the division between French and Other was more absolute, with a clear idea of a standard form of legitimate French language and culture, which was the only path towards integration and belonging to the nation as a citizen, exclusive of all personal traits, in particular religious ones. In contrast, in the English case children had more possibilities for negotiating Otherness, such as legitimised curricular spaces to talk about religion, which (for Muslim children at least) they could associate with other dimensions of Otherness such as cultural background and language. Multilingual signs and the presence of bilingual Teaching Assistants also created spaces for the negotiation of Otherness in school. This shows that the multicultural ethos of the English school did play a role, albeit minimal, in the way immigrant-background children negotiated linguistic and religious differences in school. Finally, the understanding of school as multiple spaces allowed children in the English case to attribute a higher status to their other languages in alternative school spaces such as community, although these different spaces remained separate from each

other (Welply, 2017). In the French case, the unitary perception of school as the *École de la Republique* did not allow for this type of articulation. There was no space to legitimise any linguistic and religious differences and no discursive tools to do so.

Finally, children's views also revealed the multiple ways in which they negotiated differences within given monolingual and monocultural school spaces. These forms of negotiation were often dependent on children's understanding of 'contextual cues' (Gumperz and Roberts, 1991), which gave children more or less ease in engaging with their linguistic or religious differences in school. For some children this meant finding spaces of curricular legitimacy for their other language or religion in class or with peers. For others, this meant being stuck in a discursive void, without the tools or the confidence to talk about linguistic or religious differences in school (Welply 2017, 2018). This draws attention to children's agency in the process. The analysis above, building on Bourdieu's concepts of legitimation and misrecognition (1991) has shown the institutional mechanisms at play and the ways in which dominant values are reinforced within the field of education. It has highlighted the more tacit forms of symbolic domination present in each school system, whether they are the contradiction between a professed multicultural ethos and monocultural school practices as in the English school or the symbolically violent adaptations of the 'indifference to difference' principle towards more stereotypical and deficit approaches to linguistic and religious diversity in the French school. However, it is important to recognise within these processes that children had multiple ways of negotiating linguistic and religious differences within these institutional and discursive constraints. Paul Ricoeur's notion of utopia, inseparable from ideology (1986), reminds us of children's capacity to imagine and create alternate identities around linguistic and cultural difference, and emphasises the capacity of individuals to negotiate multiple positions in relation to institutional structures. In order to develop fully inclusive classrooms, it is important to understand the exclusionary mechanisms at play, the implicit forms of institutional discrimination, the role of wider socio-political discourses but also how children respond to these, develop strategies and find new fields of legitimation, creating new possibilities for inclusion.

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This chapter revisits data presented in an earlier article:

Welply, O. (2017). "My Language…I Don't Know How to Talk About It": Children's Views on Language Diversity in Primary Schools in France and England. *Language and Intercultural Communication*, 17(4): 437-454.

[i] These categories corresponded to children's self-definitions
[ii] Origin is the term used in France to speak about cultural, ethnic or national background